

CITY VIEWS

Local Government Fellowship Program Prepares the Leaders of Tomorrow

Recognizing the importance of attracting new, young talent to the field of municipal management, the New Hampshire Municipal Management Association (NHMMA) launched the Local Government Management Fellowship Program in 2008 in an effort to groom future leaders. The program is a partnership among the NHMMA, the University of New Hampshire (UNH) and the New Hampshire Local Government Center (LGC).

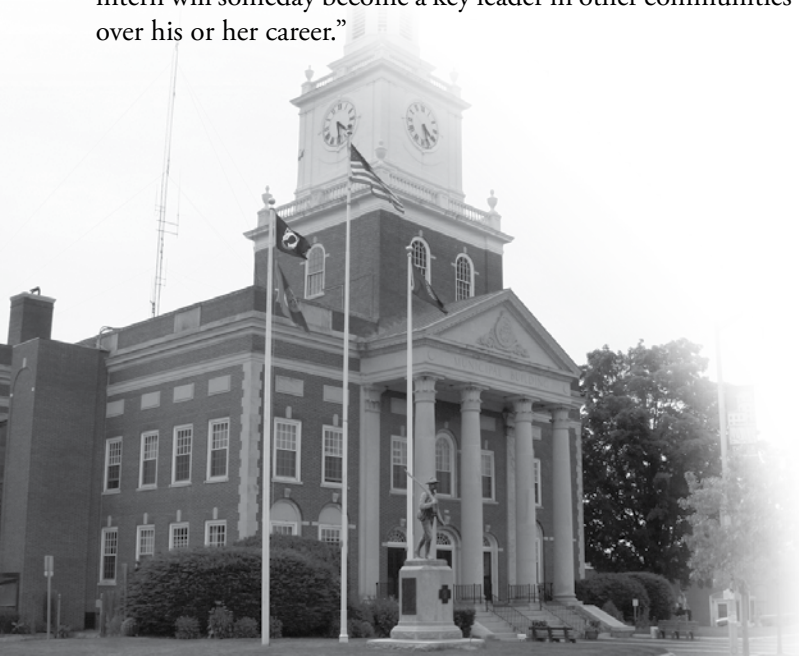
Jon Steiner, LGC associate executive director for member relations, serves as LGC point person and was instrumental in launching the fellowship program. "A day in the life of a city or town manager is different every day," notes Steiner. "By providing our future leaders some real world hands-on experience, we are furthering the LGC's mission of promoting local government. It's a win-win. We help to provide our members with an intern now to work on vital projects and in turn that intern will someday become a key leader in other communities over his or her career."

The City of Dover was one of three municipal partners (and the only city) selected to participate in the 2009 fellowship program. Dover City Manager Mike Joyal served as a mentor for intern Alison Rendinaro, a UNH master's of public administration candidate. In the course of the fellowship, Rendinaro was involved in a variety of activities and projects working with each city department and numerous staff, providing a broad overview of municipal government functions. "Alison provided a fresh set of eyes to the problem solving being addressed during various meetings," says Joyal. "By her attentiveness to the discussions and willingness to interject with questions, she helped bring a fresh perspective and additional ideas to consider."

Among her special projects for the City of Dover, Rendinaro focused on assembling a financial indicators analysis. The City benefited greatly from having an intern with time available to focus on this complex project that might otherwise never be completed. "Although the City collected and reviewed considerable amounts of economic and financial data, Alison's work has pulled the information into a single resource that can be easily updated from year to year and will be readily available to our City Council, the City's executive management team, our employees and, of course, our citizens and business community," notes Joyal. "The financial indicators analysis will provide the City with the ability to monitor and respond to changing economic and financial trends."

During her Dover internship, Rendinaro was actively involved in meetings and conducted presentations for the City's executive management team, employee committees and labor groups. Joyal notes, "She has had a unique opportunity to experience situations where she has had to defend proposals, explain policy positions and address the usual push back associated with instituting organizational changes."

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NEW HAMPSHIRE
CITY VIEWS

**NEWS FOR NEW HAMPSHIRE
CITY OFFICIALS**

City Views is published five times per year providing news and information of concern to elected New Hampshire city officials.

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LGC Mission:

The New Hampshire Local Government Center's mission is to provide programs and services that strengthen the quality of its member governments and the ability of their officials and employees to serve the public by being a catalyst for dialogue and action, an advocate on issues, an advisor on problems, a provider of benefits and risk management services, an educator/trainer in skills and a resource for information.



Local Government Center

New Hampshire Municipal Association
Workers' Compensation Trust
Property-Liability Trust
HealthTrust

Message from Maura Carroll



On November 3, many cities had elections for mayor, city council and boards of aldermen. Congratulations to all of you who have been elected and re-elected to these important seats in local government. These are challenging times at every level of government, but particularly at the local level, with state and federal assistance decreasing in so many ways. The *Concord Monitor* put it very well when referring to those individuals willing to put their names on the ballot as "civic heroes." You are, indeed, civic heroes and the work you do has an effect on hundreds of thousands of people. We look forward to working with all of you, new and experienced officials, and stand ready to offer programs, products and assistance where you need them.

To all of you who will be leaving city government at the end of the year, *thank you* for your dedication and your service to local government. The hours of meetings you have attended, the commitment you have brought to your cities, the innovative ideas you have offered during your tenure, are a tribute to you and to the people you have served. We are delighted to have had the opportunity to work with you and hope that we have helped to make your jobs easier and more meaningful. We salute you, local civic heroes!

Warmest regards,

Maura Carroll
Interim Executive Director
New Hampshire Local Government Center

National League of Cities 2009 Fiscal Conditions Survey: New England Participation

The National League of Cities (NLC) 2009 fiscal conditions survey found few notable differences among responses from small, medium and large cities, according to Christopher Hoene, director of research and innovation for NLC. "The malaise is mostly nationwide, particularly when it comes to perceptions of city finance officers," notes Hoene. NLC distributes the survey to all cities and towns over 50,000 in population and to a "panel" of cities under 50,000. Of the 97 municipalities in the New England region to receive the survey, 16 municipalities responded, including Lowell, Reading and Cambridge, MA; Groton, Hartford and Meriden, CT; Pawtucket, RI; Montpelier, VT; and Berlin, NH. For a detailed analysis of the survey findings in the New England region, contact Chris Hoene at hoene@nlc.org.

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National League of Cities Survey Finds Cities' Financial Conditions Worsen

by Gregory Minchak

Cities are in the early stages of registering the effects of the nation's economic downturn, according to NLC's annual report on fiscal conditions. The report finds that the ability of cities to meet their financial needs will worsen through 2010 and beyond.

"The current economic situation is wreaking havoc on city budgets," said NLC President Kathleen Novak, mayor, Northglenn, Colo. "Although we are beginning to see signs of a possible recovery in the national economy, city officials will need to be more proactive than ever in terms of monitoring their budgets, reevaluating budget priorities and identifying new revenue and savings opportunities."

The report, "City Fiscal Conditions in 2009," reveals that cities face significant budget gaps (-2.9 percent) this year due to the decline of income (-1.3 percent) and sales tax (-3.8 percent) collections. These taxes are typically the earliest source of city revenue to decline as job losses in a community increase and consumer purchases decrease. Property taxes, which make up the bulk of city revenue nationwide, are beginning to slow (1.6 percent growth) as real property assessments are adjusted to reflect declining housing values.

Because most city tax revenue is collected only at a few specific points during the year, or over the course of several years in the case of property tax revenue, there is usually a time lag of 18 months to several years before economic shifts have an impact on city fiscal conditions.

Michael A. Pagano, the report's co-author and a professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, cautions, "Cities face the burden of confronting the effects of the downturn for years after any recession ends. This means that cities will be navigating the implications of the downturn for awhile longer, even if the business climate turns around immediately."

In the face of declining revenue and increasing expenses, city finance officers are pessimistic about cities' abilities to meet their financial needs. Nine in 10 (88 percent) say this year will



be difficult in meeting fiscal needs, while 89 percent expect the same in 2010. This is the worst outlook the report has detailed in 24 years.

Under state law, most cities are required to balance their budgets, which means their expenses cannot exceed revenues in a given budget year. According to the report, to meet projected budget shortfalls, cities are taking a number of steps to cut back expenses or raise revenue. Cities are instituting hiring freezes or layoffs (67 percent), canceling capital infrastructure projects (62 percent) and cutting services other than public safety (32 percent). Many are decreasing spending on non-personnel operating expenses.

To raise revenue, according to the report, cities are increasing the fees charged for city services or increasing taxes. Four in 10 (42 percent) cities are increasing the level of fees they charge and 25 percent are creating new fees for some services. The report indicates that 25 percent of cities have increased property taxes.

Most of the available economic data points to a slow recovery beginning sometime in 2010. Housing is expected to recover slowly with consumer spending remaining at low levels. Since these are the main drivers of property tax and sales tax revenue streams, cities will continue to endure a difficult economic environment in the coming months.

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Fellowship Program... *continued from front page*

“It’s been a phenomenal experience,” reports Rendinaro. Among many accomplishments, she developed a policy and implemented reimbursement procedures to address tax liabilities associated with employer-provided cell phone use; assembled and administered a comprehensive citizen survey that will be used to benchmark service quality and aid in identifying budgeting priorities; researched and updated several personnel policies; and developed a formal city-wide new employee orientation program that will be incorporated into the city’s standard training.

While classroom learning is essential, nothing compares to the real-world, hands-on experience of a local government internship. “It’s incredible the amount of learning that is possible when you are coming into a situation with good public managers,” remarks Rendinaro. “It’s good to see such good people doing such a great job.” She plans to pursue a career in local government management, inspired in large part by this fellowship opportunity. “You can really be there and impact change,” notes Rendinaro. “It’s inspiring.”

“Municipal management is an exciting and rewarding career choice,” says Joyal. “However, there continues to be a shrinking pool of younger professionals interested and prepared to step up and successfully lead local governments through times of innovation and change. As community leaders who share an ongoing commitment for sustaining and improving the quality of life for our citizens, city and town managers

must assume an increasing responsibility for engaging and developing promising individuals to fulfill these critical leadership roles in our local governments.”

For more information about the NHMMA fellowship program and the 2010 call for municipal applications, contact Jon Steiner at 800.852.3358, ext. 310 or e-mail jsteiner@nhlgc.org.



While serving as intern for the City of Dover through the NHMMA fellowship program, UNH Master of Public Administration candidate Alison Rendinaro attended LGC’s September 22 Budget and Finance Workshop for an overview of the municipal budget law, development of effective budget presentations and recent legislative changes that will impact municipal budgets.

NLC Survey... *continued from page 3*

“Cities will be seeing difficult conditions for some time,” said Chris Hoene, co-author and director of research and innovation for NLC. “The impact of the housing market drop is really just beginning to be felt. City leaders and residents will need to work together more than ever to make decisions about the future of their communities in terms of the types and levels of services cities will provide in the next few years.”

The report also calls for a greater coordination of effort among local, state and federal governments in responding to these challenges.

“It is imperative that as the national economy recovers, the nation keeps its attention focused on the recovery of

our cities,” said NLC Executive Director Donald J. Borut. “The fiscal health of our cities is essential to keeping our nation innovative and competitive on the world stage.”

The City Fiscal Conditions Survey is a national mail and online survey of finance officers in U.S. cities conducted in the spring and summer of each year. This is the 24th edition of the survey, which began in 1986.

Gregory Minchak is manager of media relations, public affairs and member relations for the National League of Cities. For more information about the Fiscal Conditions Survey, contact NLC at 202.626.3000 or e-mail info@nlc.org. Visit NLC online at www.nlc.org.

LGC's 2009 Wage, Salary and Benefits Survey Offers Comparative Data

Cities across the country are wrestling with some of the most challenging budget decisions in recent history, and staffing budgets present particularly difficult choices. The National League of Cities 2009 fiscal conditions survey released in late September found that 67 percent of cities are instituting hiring freezes or other staff reduction methods in an attempt to help close budget gaps. (See page 3 for more on the NLC survey.)

All good employers know that offering competitive wages and benefits are a key to maintaining a loyal workforce. You've spent years investing in and training your staff, and it's hard to put a price tag on the value of institutional knowledge. It's important to weigh the options and make sound choices to ensure staff loyalty and continuity of services.

How do your city's salaries and benefits compare to those of similar-sized municipalities? Are you concerned that your municipality is paying employees too much—or not enough? Did you know that the New Hampshire Local Government Center (LGC) gathers data that can help you answer these questions and more?

Each spring, LGC invites all municipalities to participate in the annual wage, salary and benefits survey. More than 85 percent of municipalities responded to the 2009 survey, making this the most comprehensive report in the survey's 35-year history. Each fall, LGC publishes the resulting data in the *Wage, Salary and Benefits Survey for Municipalities*, a two-volume spiral-bound set comprising more than 600 pages of information, which is accompanied by a CD containing the publication chapters in printer-friendly PDF format. One complimentary copy has been mailed to each municipality as a benefit of LGC membership, and additional copies can be ordered through the LGC website or by calling 800.852.3358, ext. 100.



The wages and salaries publication provides information on core positions within the categories of Administrative Officials; Clerical/Fiscal; Labor, Trade and Public Works; Library; Inspection, Technical and Professional; Police and Fire. The survey strives to collect information on common positions found in the majority of municipalities, but may not include every position within your particular city. The benefits publication includes basics like holidays, vacation, sick leave, health and dental insurance.

Additional information details benefits such as personal leave, retirement, uniform allowance, labor contracts, pay and longevity plans, short-term disability, long-term disability and life insurance, as well as percent of healthcare premium paid by the municipality for single, two-person and family plans and buy-out amounts to employees that decline coverage.

The 2009 publication is also available for on-screen viewing at the LGC website. Visit www.nhlgc.org > Human Resource Services > Wage, Salary and Benefits Survey.

Customize data to your city's needs

Based on criteria you specify, LGC can analyze data and produce a customized report to show you how your community stacks up, such as comparing your municipality to others of similar size, creating regional comparisons, or a variety of other comparative methods. LGC's database contains survey information dating back to 2003, which can be used to make historic comparisons and identify trends during economic cycles.

If your city is considering conducting a comprehensive review of employees' salaries, we can design a report that compares salaries for positions in your community with those offered in communities with similar regional or population-based characteristics. Such a report is also helpful when creating new positions, too.

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LGC's 68th Annual Conference

November 18-20, 2009 • Radisson Hotel Manchester



LGC's 2009 Annual Conference features an outstanding selection of more than 60 sessions covering areas of finance, governance, health and safety, human resources, land use and environment, schools, technology and more. Special events will honor outstanding achievements, networking discussions will foster dialogue and inspire new ideas, and the Exhibit Hall will feature 100 vendors offering products, services and solutions designed to meet your needs. Don't miss this valuable opportunity to learn how other local governments are rising to their present challenges—and planning for the future. Visit the Annual Conference page at www.nhlgc.org to preview sessions by topic, download the event schedule and register online.

Celebrating Excellence in City Annual Reports

Congratulations to the winners of LGC's Excellence in Annual Report Awards, city category:

1 st Place	City of Nashua
2 nd Place	City of Portsmouth
3 rd Place	City of Berlin

Winners will be honored at the LGC Annual Conference Excellence in Annual Report Awards Luncheon on Thursday, November 19. Visit the Annual Conference page at www.nhlgc.org and select "Events and Awards" to access the full list of award winners.

NHMA Annual Meeting Features Vote on New Committee Members

The New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA) will host its annual membership meeting on Thursday, November 19 at 1:30 p.m., in conjunction with the LGC Annual Conference. NHMA members will vote on candidates to fill open positions on the Committee on Government Affairs and Municipal Advocacy Committee. For more information, contact the NHMA government affairs staff at 800.852.3358, ext. 384, or e-mail governmentaffairs@nhlgc.org.

Wage, Salary and Benefits Survey... *continued from page 5*

Benefits are often an area of uncertainty. How do your offerings compare? Perhaps your municipality is considering switching health insurance carriers or changing the amount employees contribute toward their health coverage benefit. Using this database, we can customize a report that shows what employees in other municipalities are contributing or which health insurance carriers are being utilized within comparable communities.

The customized reporting service is currently offered free of charge to member municipalities and reports can be provided in PDF or Excel format. Customized wage, salary and benefits

reports are a valuable resource available to assist municipalities in making staffing and budget decisions. As you debate staffing options, remember this free service—just one more benefit of LGC membership!

For more information about the LGC Wage, Salary and Benefits Survey and to request a customized report, contact Erica Johnson, senior report and data coordinator for the LGC Human Resources Department, at 800.852.3358, ext. 120, or e-mail ejohnson@nhlgc.org.

Rochester Police Department Lauds LGC's Interactive Use of Force Training

In late September, the Rochester Police Department participated in LGC's *Interactive Use of Force Simulations Training*. This intense, interactive training program for law enforcement personnel is designed to provide officers with instruction on how to escalate and de-escalate through the use of force continuum. All course scenarios represent real-life situations facing communities, with civilian actors to lend authenticity to the scenarios. In a letter commending LGC staff



for the training, Rochester Police Chief David G. Dubois noted, "The feedback from the officers and dispatchers that participated in the training was overwhelmingly positive. Several have noted it was some of the best scenario-based training they have attended in their careers." Communications dispatchers also participate, relaying communications via radio while observing the scenarios. As Chief Dubois notes, this participation provides dispatchers with "an understanding of the stress that officers are faced with while on the street and what can be happening 'on the other side of the radio.'" To learn more about LGC's *Interactive Use of Force Simulations Training* available to departments participating in LGC Risk Management Services, contact LGC Risk and Health Manager Scott Weden at 800.852.3358, ext. 302, or e-mail sweden@nhlgc.org.

THE LGC ACADEMY: THE NEXT GENERATION OF TRAINING COURSES



Today's local governments—including schools, counties and municipalities—face increasingly complex laws, regulations and policies plus human resource, leadership and job skill challenges. The LGC Academy can help you learn how to effectively deal with them all through a variety of comprehensive trainings. It offers a convenient learning structure for today's busy employees and elected officials by combining online learning tools and face-to-face classroom experiences with highly qualified instructors.

Offerings range from financial courses that span a period of three months—like Basic Government Accounting and Internal Controls & Fraud Prevention—to self-paced, online modules such as Stress Management and Emergency Vehicle Liability. They're all designed to enhance your job performance so that you can bring greater value to your organization. To view current LGC Academy curricula, visit www.lgcacademy.org.

"I am grateful for the support of the classes you are offering ... it is reassuring that there are places to turn if I get too stuck."

— LGC Academy participant

www.nhlgc.org
800.852.3358

MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH CARING AND INNOVATION

Important Events for City Officials

Save the Date: **ELECTED CITY OFFICIALS WORKSHOP**

**Saturday, February 6, 2010
at the Local Government Center**

Attendees will receive a copy of the 2010 edition
Guidebook for New Hampshire Elected City Officials.

Details will be announced and posted to the Event Calendar at www.nhlgc.org in December.

NEWS FOR NEW HAMPSHIRE CITY OFFICIALS



Local Government Center

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